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The Wrong Murderer

By HUGH CLEVELY

SYNOPSIS: Terence Mahony has arranged for the police to find out a good deal about Ambrose Lawson's gang of kidnapers and dope runners; he also has captured Lawson. But Terence is on tires of suspicion of having killed Vincent Little, whom, he believes, Ruth Fraser had leaned the side of Bernard Fraser, his friend. So he bargains to release Lawson in return for Lawson's surrendering Ruth. Ruth has arrived; Terence is speaking to her for Lawson's benefit.

Chapter 39.

FATTY KICKS.

"What the devil do we care if the police are after us, so long as we're together again," Mahony said. "They haven't caught us yet, and I'm going to take good care they don't catch us."

He turned towards the little office and made a motion to Fatty Bassett.

"All right, let that man go," he said.

Reluctantly Fatty cut through the cords that bound Lawson; from his expression as he did so it was easy to judge that he would rather have cut Lawson's throat. Lawson stretched his cramped limbs and rose somewhat unsteadily.

"Thank you," he said. "That's much better."

He turned to Mahony and Ruth, who had just entered the little office.

"You two seem rather pleased with each other," he observed. "Well, make the most of it while you have the chance, because I don't think your pleasure will last very long. If the police don't get you both, I shall."

With that he turned away with the intention of walking out. But he had only taken a step when a heavy hand fell on his shoulder; he felt himself twisted round to stare into the red, enraged features of Fatty Bassett.

"'Ark a mo', mister Big Boss," he said thickly. "You fancy yer chance like 'ell, don't yer? You reckon you're the great big noise 'oo gives the orders wot other people obey. Maybe there was something in that a fortnight ago. But that's all finished now. Your number's up, see? An' now 'op it, an' take that for a keepsake."

With that he gave Lawson a shove forward towards the office door, and at the same time thrust out his large right foot in a hearty kick. Lawson shot through the office door as if propelled from a large catapult, pitched forward on his hands and knees, and rolled over twice on the oily garage floor. Then his face contorted with rage and pain, he rose slowly to his feet.

"I'll—I'll have you killed for this!" he gasped.

"We've 'eard that sort of yarn before, an' it don't cut no ice with us at all," said Fatty Bassett jeringly. "'Op it now, before I kick you really 'ard."

Lawson withdrew, with what dignity he could muster. Ruth and Bassett and Mahony were left in the office.

Bassett sat down on the edge of the table, dangling his legs. He had recovered his temper and was looking cheerful now.

"I reckon we handed Lawson a good old jolt tonight," he remarked. "I don't mind tellin' you I've 'ad one or two anxious moments today. Some of my blokes was a bit windy about buckin' up against the Big Boss. Now they know 'e can be knocked about an' kidnapped, just like anybody else, they won't be scared of 'im no more."

"And his own people won't be so convinced that he can't be beaten, and they may start getting a bit windy in their turn," added Mahony.

"He turned to Ruth.

"What happened to you, Ruth?" he asked.

Ruth's story was brief. She had gone to the house in the St. John's Wood Road, and had found the two men Mahony had left there tied up on the floor. Rashly, without bothering to ask questions, she had cut their bonds.

One of them had recognized her, and they had repaid her for the good turn she had done them by tying her up and leaving her while they fetched a car to take her away. She did not know where they had taken her. After being imprisoned for some hours, she had been thrust into a car and brought to the garage. That was all she knew.

"What's going to happen next?" she asked when she had finished her story. "What do you think I ought to do?"

"I hardly know," admitted Mahony. "You see, Inspector Kennedy only let me go tonight on condition that I reported to him at Scotland Yard at ten in the morning and told him if I had any news of you."

"Wot's that?" exclaimed Fatty Bassett. "You've got to go to the Yard in he mornin' and tell 'em wot you know abart Miss Fraser? 'Ave you got to take 'er with you."

"The Inspector didn't say I had to," answered Mahony.

"Right," said Bassett promptly. "If you don't know where she is, you can't tell 'im, can you?"

He turned to Ruth.

"You trust yourself to me, Miss. I'll hide yer away so that the cops will never find yer."

Ruth shook her head.

"Thank you very much, but I'll stay with Terence," she said. "If Inspector Kennedy hadn't let him go tonight, he wouldn't have been able to rescue me, I'm grateful for that. I don't want the Inspector to think that Terence and I have cheated him after he did us a good turn."

"I mean it actually take you with me to Scotland Yard, Ruth," put in Mahony. "But if the Inspector wants to know where you are, I shall have to tell him."

She smiled at him.

"I'll do exactly what you tell me to," she said.

Fatty Bassett shrugged his large shoulders.

"Of course, if you blinkin' well insist on givin' yerselves up to the cops, there's nobody can stop yer," he remarked gloomily.

Mahony lit a cigaret thoughtfully.

"No," he answered. "But things may not turn out so badly as you seem to think they will. Kennedy is clever, and a pretty decent chap too, and I've got a proposition to put to him that may make things a good deal better for us. Anyway, it's no good arguing about it now. We'll have to see what happens at ten tomorrow."

Mahony was still in disguise when he presented himself at Scotland Yard. Inspector Kennedy looked tired, as if he had spent a sleepless night.

"So you've turned up," he remarked. "You've got a nerve. That was a hell of a show you pulled off at the Golden Centipede Club last night."

"The Golden Centipede Club!" echoed Mahony innocently, as if he had never heard of the place. "Why, what happened there?"

The Inspector smiled with an air of grim satisfaction.

"You know damned well what happened there," he replied. "And incidentally that club will not be opening again. We found evidence on the premises that it was one of the principal dope distributing centres of London, and we've made six arrests."

"Good," said Mahony. "Did you find any evidence against our friend Lawson?"

"Still harping on Lawson, eh," commented the Inspector. "No, we didn't find any evidence against him. So far as we're concerned, we haven't any evidence, except your word, that Lawson is not an entirely blameless citizen. What's happened to Miss Fraser? Any news of her?"

"Yes," answered Mahony. "I suppose you'd like me to tell you where she is?"

"I certainly should: I'm very anxious to get hold of that young woman," said the Inspector.

"She won't tell you anything you want to know if you get hold of her," said Mahony coolly. "And if you arrest me I shan't tell you anything you want to know either. So that won't do you an awful lot of good. Listen; are you willing to take a sporting chance, Inspector?"

"What is the chance?" asked the Inspector.

"This," answered Mahony. "I've come here according to our bargain and I'm willing to tell you where Miss Fraser is, and you can arrest the two of us if you like. We'll be safe in prison, and nobody will be able to get at us, and you won't be any nearer to finding the head of the dope and kidnapping ring, the man you're after.

"What I want you to do is not to arrest either of us at present. Give us a couple of hours to make ourselves scarce and then set all the policement in the country looking for us. Then, if you catch us—we'll tell you all we know. And if you don't catch us, and we shall do our best to see that you don't—you'll stand a good chance of catching somebody else—the man you really want."

Inspector Kennedy considered for a few moments. His keen, clever face was very thoughtful. Then he nodded slightly.

(Copyright, 1936, Hugh Clevely)

Lawson keeps a dangerous rendezvous, tomorrow.

Back In Prison

LANSING, Kas., Nov. 30—(AP)—Estil P. Butler, 60, at his own request for a "quiet place to die," was back in the Kansas penitentiary today.

An occupant of prisons for 24 years, Butler was paroled last April by Gov. Alf M. Landon from serving out a life term for possessing a quart of liquor—a severe penalty made mandatory under the Kansas habitual criminal act. Friends said he went "straight."

But he became seriously ill. Without relatives, he made his strange request.

"I've spent so much of my life in prison that it will seem like home," Butler said.

Duck Hunting Season Poor, O'Connell Says

Duck hunting this season has been poorest in several years Frank B. O'Connell, chief state conservation officer, said on his return from an inspection tour in the western part of the state. The season closes Monday night.

Early in the month, O'Connell said, there was good hunting in the western section of the Platte valley, but since then the shooting has been poor all over the state. The weather, he said, is too dry and the birds are not leaving the refuges.

See: After 21 Years

Jane Borsch (above), blind for 21 years, thought she had become ill when she regained her sight suddenly while attending a class at Arkansas State college where she was studying to become a teacher of the blind. She was blind when 4 years old. (A. P. Photo.)

Hanford Pierce Rites Are To Be Held Tuesday

Funeral services for Hanford E. Pierce, 74, of 4141 South Forty-eighth street, who died at a local hospital at 8:30 o'clock Sunday morning, will be held at Castle, Roper & Matthews chapel at 2 o'clock Tuesday, Rev. R. L. Tressler officiating. Interment will be in the College View cemetery.

Mr. Pierce had been a resident of Lincoln 37 years, and is survived by his wife, Lina; a son, Ralph W. of Omaha; two sisters, Minnie Pierce of Hartford City, Ind., and Mrs. Mary Atkinson of Haven, Kans.; and a brother Charles of Hartford City, Ind.

Illegitimate Son Must Support Needy Mother

NEW YORK, Nov. 30—(AP)—An illegitimate son is required by law to support his needy mother, according to an opinion of Justice Jacob Panken on file today in Domestic Relations court here.

The decision was in the case of Curlin Smith, 56, who was ordered to pay $5.75 a week for the support of his mother, Mrs. Josephine Lee, 56. Smith said he had been brought up to believe that his mother was his sister, but the court held that this did not affect the case.

'SHRINKING' MAN GAINS 15 POUNDS

MINNEAPOLIS, Nov. 30—(AP)—Minneapolis' "shrinking man", is staging a comeback.

Hans Nelson, 52-year-old painter, has lost "that tired feeling" which reduced his height 10 inches and weight 50 pounds during 13 years.

Since he reported to University of Minnesota hospital authorities a year ago, Nelson has had two relapses that kept him confined for several months in the institution. But now he has gained 15 pounds, can drive an automobile and "putter around the garage." He is a victim of ostiamalacia, a disease produced by over-acceleration of the parathyroid gland.

Rail Buying Booms

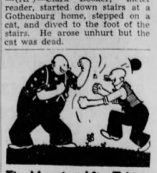
NEW YORK, Nov. 30—(AP)—November rail buying topped 375,000 tons today as additional orders were announced in one of the heaviest monthly runs of business for teel rail makers in recent years.

It put orders worth about $13,500,000 on their books at the current price for rails, $36.37 a ton.

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific divided an order for 35,000 tons among the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corp., Inland Steel Co., and Colorado Fuel & Iron Co.

Catastrophe

GOTHENBURG, Neb., Nov. 30—(AP)—Clark Booker, meter reader, started down stairs at a Gothenburg home, stepped on a cat, and dived to the foot of the stairs. He arose unhurt but the cat was dead.



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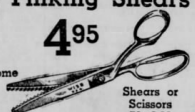

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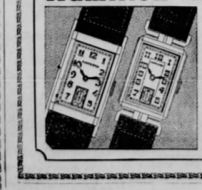

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